

ABERDARE COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Inclement Weather Policy

Drafted
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Revised on

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(Headteacher)

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Inclement Weather Policy

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This document sets out Aberdare Community School's policy in relation to the impact on services and the requirement for employees to attend work during severe or inclement weather. Its purpose is to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and employees should the school have to deal with severe, inclement weather; and
- ensure that all employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the event of severe weather.

1.2 All schools must have contingency procedures to remain open wherever possible. The decision to close the school will only be made as a last resort.

2.0 Definition

2.1 Inclement weather can be defined as weather which is sufficiently adverse as to cause reduced visibility, where there are very high winds, where road surfaces become hazardous due to snow, ice or floods, or where there is a danger of vehicles becoming stranded in remote locations.

3.0 General

3.1 The responsibility for deciding to close the school because of severe inclement weather lies with the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, as the Headteacher must make the decision in the light of local circumstances, in particular, checking local weather forecasts and undertaking a risk assessment (see appendix 1).

3.2 This policy aims to enable the Headteacher to maintain a service to parents and pupils for as long as is reasonably practical and that **a partial closure of the school should be considered before complete closure.**

3.4 The interest and safety of children and employees are paramount under these circumstances. Allowing children to walk home unsupervised in potentially difficult

or dangerous conditions or to return to an empty house may not be in their best interests. The age of the child in question must be taken into consideration when a decision is made. It may be safer to keep pupils and staff in the school.

3.5 All employees must make every reasonable effort to attend their usual place of work unless a specific announcement is made by the Head teacher not to do so. Staff must not interpret general radio or television announcements, announcements by other employers or generalised advice from the Police to the effect that only essential journeys should be made, as an approval to remain at home.

3.4 Authorisation to remain at home may only come from a line manager or Headteacher. All employees will be contacted via their line manager by a text or telephone message. There will then be an expectation for staff to follow the chain of contact to ensure all employees are made aware of the decision for the school to be closed or remain open (see Appendix 2).

3.5 Employees should only be allowed to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety, but decisions must be made on an individual basis.

3.6 It is considered appropriate for employees to walk a reasonable distance to their place of work or nearest available transport, dependent on the nature of the route.

3.7 Due regard will be given to staff who are disabled or have a disabling medical condition.

4.0 Considerations - Pupils

4.1 The Head teacher will comply with any request from a transport provider that wishes to transport certain pupils early as the operators may be responding to meteorological warnings. However this does not mean that all pupils should be sent home early.

4.2 It may be the case that only those pupils travelling by school transport, or those living in rural areas, need to be sent home early. There may be no safety benefits in sending home early those individuals who walk. Indeed, this may cause further

problems and may impact on other services if parents need to leave their place of work early in order to look after their children.

4.3 Parents will be contacted to inform them of the school's closure and to ensure the safety of pupils after they leave the school. Parents have a responsibility to ensure all mobile phone numbers are kept up to date so that they can be contacted quickly if required. The Headteacher should consider whether it is preferable to keep children at school until they are collected. Parents should be informed in advance of the school's procedures in the event of inclement weather.

4.4 Once pupils are travelling to school, including on link transport, and adverse weather develops, the journey will continue until the transport arrives at the school. Therefore, the school will remain open until the pupils arrive at the school and arrangements for transporting or collecting pupils have been finalised.

5.0 Considerations - Employees

5.1 It is essential that employees who are going to be late or are unable to attend work, telephone the school as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than fifteen minutes before the start of the school day. Clearly there may be times when this is not possible and allowances will be given in circumstances when there is no access to a telephone. However contact must be made as soon as reasonably practicable in such instances.

5.2 Employees who fail to notify the school that they are unable to attend will be regarded as having taken unauthorised absence and therefore not be paid for the period of absence.

5.3 Employees are advised that, in circumstances where conditions prevent their attendance at their normal place of work and the school has not been closed, then they should ensure they complete their work from home.

5.4 Employees may be authorised to go home early if there is a genuine need on the basis of their personal safety, but decisions must be made on an individual basis and sanctioned by the Head teacher, and consideration given to adopting one of the

alternative provisions stated in paragraph 5.3.

5.5 If pupils are sent home early due to hazardous driving conditions, consideration to employees who travel to work by car should also be taken by the Headteacher and sent home if appropriate.

5.6 If the school has been closed by the Headteacher, **all** employees will be paid at their normal daily rate. This will include supply teachers who have been booked by the school, to find that the decision to close has been taken. All employees will be contacted via their line manager to ensure there is clear communication with regard to the school being open or closed. This will be via a text message or phone call and therefore all employees should ensure their contact numbers are kept up to date.

5.7 In the event that the school remains closed and the weather conditions do not improve, resulting in absence of more than one day, employees should maintain regular contact with the Head teacher/Line Manager.

5.8 If employees cannot attend work because of care for a dependent they should take leave in line with the 'Special Leave Policy'. This may be unpaid.

Appendix 1 Extreme Weather – Risk Assessment

Activity	Hazard	Persons who may be at risk	Controls required	Further considerations
Getting to the school.	Dangerous travel in extreme bad weather conditions.	Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff, learners.	Headteacher monitors weather conditions/ warnings www.metoffice.gov.uk No travel should be considered if extreme bad weather warning and advice given for only essential journeys to be undertaken	Rural location of school and/or majority of school personnel. National warnings may not be accurate at local level, so local media broadcasts may also help.
Travel via known areas of expected road closure or steep gradients.	Dangerous travel in extreme bad weather conditions.	Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff.	Prior planning by staff regarding alternative 'main road' routes, or rail, to school location.	Walking may be reasonably expected, when cars or other vehicles cannot make it all the way into the school. Headteacher to consider what is reasonable based on locality and staff.
Main entrance into school grounds.	Entrance not passable.	Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff.	Park car outside school until clearance can be made. If not passable by foot, assess other reasonable means into the school.	Signage on main entrance, or other entrances if prohibited from entry due to ice or other obstruction.
Main entrance into school grounds.	Entrance an immediate slip hazard.	Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff, learners, parents/carers and visitors.	Clearance of slip hazard, unless alternative route found. Other routes may be prioritised and cause closure of the main entrance. Salt/grit may be adequate, but manual work may also be required to clear snow/ice if this is the main and only entrance.	If entrance is used by both vehicles and pedestrians, salting/gritting may be a priority. Cars may be stopped from entry to give priority to pedestrians and avoid risk.
Gaining appropriate members of staff to open school.	Inadequate supervision.	Teachers and learners.	A means of communicating with school staff in order to establish their	The emphasis should be on how to operate safely, not whether a full and normal curriculum could

<p>Headteacher to establish what would constitute appropriate supervision – through dynamic assessment on the day of extreme bad weather. Primary school learners are likely to be local, with a greater expectancy of attendance.</p>			<p>attendance on the day of extreme bad weather. A means to communicate with school bus company, local authority and local bus service operators to establish learner means of getting to school.</p>	<p>be followed. Schools in rural areas or secondary schools have learners from a wider area and may be more dependent on school buses or public transport, therefore numbers may be less – and supervision easier.</p>
<p>Access to school buildings.</p>	<p>Slips, trips or falls.</p>	<p>Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff, contractors, parents/carers and learners.</p>	<p>Salting/gritting could be undertaken when snow or ice is foreseeable. Salt/grit spreading on pedestrian walkways and snow clearance where reasonable. Whenever possible, slopes, steps, ramps, etc. should not be used. However if appropriately treated, these pedestrian walkways should be no different from a treated path. The Headteacher to determine which walkways should be used first.</p>	<p>Extreme bad weather is generally forecast, although snow/ice can be worse or less than expected, depending on local geography. If a school's salt/grit stock is low then only main walkways could be treated. Other routes could be signed to prevent use. Treatment of inner areas such as courtyards, yards or some walkways between buildings may be less of a priority.</p>
<p>Heating and welfare facilities.</p>	<p>Cold – below permitted work level. No sanitary or drinking water.</p>	<p>Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff, contractors and learners.</p>	<p>Low constant heating throughout periods of known cold snaps to prevent frozen pipes. Maintenance of water systems, for example prompt repair of leaks and drips. Regular maintenance staff checks to ensure heating and water systems are working well.</p>	<p>If the school premises cannot be heated or provision of water for sanitary use or drinking cannot be made within school hours then the school may have to close.</p>

<p>Keeping the school open.</p>	<p>Slips, trips or falls of learners at break-time</p>	<p>Learners</p>	<p>No use of yards and other external areas, when snow/ice cannot be easily removed or reduced. If there are external areas free or generally free of snow/ice, supervised play/break can be undertaken. The supervision level should be higher and running prohibited. Any areas of snow/ice remaining should be avoided and managed. Learners should be informed of the restrictions.</p>	<p>Certain areas could be cordoned off and managed through salting/gritting prior to releasing for use. Melted snow/ice can refreeze so continued attention may be needed. If yard space is restricted then staggered breaks could be undertaken. However could this system be appropriately supervised?</p>
<p>Keeping the school open.</p>	<p>Further snow or ice, or icing of previous fall.</p>	<p>Headteacher, teachers, caretaking and/or maintenance staff, and learners.</p>	<p>Headteacher to monitor the weather conditions through the Met Office and local media. Information may also be gained from the local authority. Further salt/grit could be used on walkways and other areas to minimise for the next day. Surface water could be brushed to drains to avoid icing up overnight.</p>	<p>Further stock of salt/grit could be organised and/or maintenance undertaken on water or heating systems to ensure they continue to work effectively.</p>